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Review the golden days of 2012
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Why the Salvation Army is a family for all seasons . .
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Plan for £50m retail park is left in balance

BY SOPHIE SCOTT
sophie.scott@hpnorthants.co.uk

A DECISION by the Secretary of State to 'call in' the £50m Rushden Lakes proposal has been welcomed by neighbouring councils.

The development was given the go-ahead by East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) in October but Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, announced he would make the final decision - which will see a public inquiry take place.

The plan, which would see a home and garden centre, retail units, a drive-thru food facility, lakeside visitor centre and restaurants built on the site on the edge of Rushden, had come under much opposition from Northampton Borough Council which believes it would 'jeopardise' Northampton.

Leader of the council, Cllr David Mackintosh said: "Northampton is making real progress in attracting millions of pounds of investment and creating jobs through our Northampton Alive programme and we have clearly had some success at raising this on a national level.

"It will be up to the Secretary of State to decide if this proposal goes ahead but I am confident that he has heard what is going on here in Northampton and how the enormous strides we have made could be set back by the Rushden Lakes development."

Brian Binley, MP for Northampton South, said: "I am delighted that Eric Pickles has listened to those of us who have been urging him to call in that particular planning application, which could be very harmful to Northampton and many of the towns in Northamptonshire."

MP for Northampton North Michael Ellis said: "The Rushden Lakes development would cause the town a great deal of trouble and the case against it is a very strong one. I think this decision reflects that, and I welcome it."

Cllr Steven North, leader of ENC, said: "We're aware that this will result in a public inquiry presided over by a planning inspector. We're now waiting to hear how long the inspector needs to make a decision.

"We're keen to see work start on this exciting development which will bring new jobs to the area and regenerate a site that has become run down.

"The potential to increase spending in the district, provide a better retail offer for local people and maximise leisure opportunities is just what the district needs right now so we look forward to hearing a decision."

Jon McCarthy, Development Director at LXB Retail Properties, said: "The decision is clearly disappointing, however, we absolutely still believe in Rushden Lakes and will be making the strongest possible case to the inspector in 2013."

Will you marry me? Oh yes I will

Vishal Patel made it a night to remember when he proposed to Heena Pindoria before an audience of pantomine goers at Royal & Derngate on Saturday night. To find out what happened turn to page 9.

The famous Furniture Now Winter Sale is now on with at least 10% off absolutely everything in store. Many items with up to 70% off RRP!

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Festive flooding fears as rain prompts fresh alerts

BY SOPHIE SCOTT
sophie.scott@hpnorthants.co.uk

THE county has braced itself for wet weather over the past week as flood warnings were issued after heavy rainfall.

The emergency services and partner agencies in the county have made themselves ready for any heavy rainfall that may result in flooding over the festive period.

Five flood warnings have been in place for a week now in Cogenhoe, Wellingborough, Billing Aquadrome, Thrapston and Bugbrooke.

Norman Robinson, from the Environment Agency, said: "Whilst at this stage we don't believe we will need to issue more flood warnings, there is a real possibility that rain could be heavier than expected.

"As a result, everyone needs to remain vigilant.

"If you are in a flood warning area, you should have an evacuation plan and ensure you regularly check the Environment Agency's website for updates and also sign up for our Flood Warning Direct service."

Superintendent Gary Ashton from Northamptonshire Police added: "All agencies have worked together to ensure a coordinated response to the weather we've been experiencing and the risk of flooding this is presenting. The multi-agency group is working closely with Billing Aquadrome management and Cogenhoe Mill Holiday Park to ensure they have appropriate plans in place to deal with any flooding that occurs over the Christmas and New Year period.

"We recognise this is the holiday period so have worked to minimise the risk and disruption to people across the county.

"We continue to urge people to take extra care when out and about and to avoid flood and standing water.

"Some of the water can be very deep and potentially dangerous and can conceal hidden dangers such as open drains."

Last month Billing Aquadrome residents were evacuated from the site after heavy rainfall.

They were not allowed to return because of the floods for a week.

You can keep up to date with the latest forecasts and warnings for your area on the Environment Agency website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods and you can follow the Environment Agency on Twitter at @EnvAgencyAnglia

Further flood advice can also be found at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

FLOODS: The River Nene burst its banks on Monday

Image released to find train attacker

A YOUNG woman was left 'shocked and shaken' after being inappropriately touched on a train.

British Transport Police have released images of the man who touched the female in an incident which occurred on a train between Leicester and Luton Airport Parkway.

Detective Sergeant Bill Henry, the investigating officer, said: "The victim, a 21-year-old woman from Wellingborough, was travelling on the 3.33pm Leicester to St Pancras service on November 19, when a man sat in the seat next to her.

"As the train was travelling between Leicester and Kettering, the man tried to raise the armrest between the seats, but the victim stopped him.

"When the victim reached into her bag to get her phone, the man raised the armrest between them again, before touching her indecently.

"The victim then moved to another carriage."

Officers have followed several lines of enquiry into the incident and now believe the man arrived at Leicester on a train that had come from Birmingham.

DS Henry added: "The man's behaviour has understandably left the victim feeling shocked and shaken.

"We believe the man may have links to the Midlands, or Luton, where he left the train.

"If you recognise the man, or know of his whereabouts, then we'd like to hear from you."

Anyone with information should call British Transport Police on Freefone 0800 40 50 40 quoting reference B5/NEA of 21/12/2012.

Alternatively, call the independent charity, Crimestoppers, anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Uni joins up with Kazakhstan for education

THE University of Northampton has announced that its School of Education has signed its second Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Early Years team hosted a delegation from the Abay Kazakh National Pedagogical University – the oldest and most prestigious in Kazakhstan – and welcomed Professor Aigulim Aitpayeva, Dr Aigul Iskakova and Professor Khairulla Zhanbekov for a four-day visit on December 17.

It followed on from a trip to Kazakhstan by Cilel Smith, senior lecturer in Education for Early Years at the University of Northampton.

The first six Kazakh academics are expected to arrive at the University next month to undertake a bespoke six-month EFL programme through Northampton Business School, with a second visit scheduled to happen in September.

Herald&PostBriefs

INCREASE IN MOBILE PHONE THEFTS

POLICE have issued advice to people going out to be aware of their valuables after an increase in reports of mobile phones being stolen.

A police spokesman said: "We would advise anyone out in busy, crowded places to have their wits about them at all times and make sure they are aware of any valuables they have on them.

"If you use a phone, make sure you put it away out of public view at the end of the call so as not to tempt an opportunist thief."

AWARD FOR 'PROPERTY WOMAN'

A COUNCIL officer has won an award for helping more than 1,100 families find affordable new homes.

Kirsty Ionescu, who works at Northampton Borough Council, received the National Landlord Association's Local Authority Property Woman 2012 award.

She said: "Winning this award means the work we do with our landlords and agencies has been recognised on a national stage. It was a wonderful surprise and I am very proud to have been chosen."

VAN DRIVERS SOUGHT BY POLICE

TWO van drivers who narrowly avoided two vehicles which were in a collision are being asked to come forward.

The crash happened on the A5 near the Narrow Boat pub at Weedon on December 20 at about 3.30pm.

It is believed the vans had to brake hard to avoid the collision but the drivers did not stop at the scene.

Officers would like to speak to them as they may be vital witnesses. They should call police on 101.

Cobblers fans get 'one punch can kill' message

FOOTBALL fans were given a lesson in the 'One Punch Can Kill' campaign at the weekend.

Officers from Operation Challenge, the family of Stuart Martin and the winning students of the County Schools' Challenge, talked to Cobblers' fans about violence before the match on Saturday.

Stuart, from Wellingborough, was tragically killed by one punch while on a night out in the county in 2010.

His family helped make a thought-provoking video and were closely involved with the 2012 County Schools Challenge, which was based around this tragic incident.

Students from Weavers School in Wellingborough won the competition earlier this year, designing T-shirts carrying the message 'One Punch Can Take a Life'.

Northamptonshire Inspector Kev Byrne said: "This is a great opportunity for us to get our message across and talk to people about the tragic consequences of violence.

"We are really pleased to be supported by the Cobblers in our campaign to keep people in our communities safe from harm."

Free train travel after disruption

BY SOPHIE SCOTT
sophie.scott@hpnorthants.co.uk

RAIL passengers are to be handed free travel after months of delays and cancellations.

London Midland announced that it will offer season ticket holders passes for five days of free transport.

Between October and December almost 1,000 services were affected after a shortage of drivers.

The government has told the company to offer a £7 million package of benefits.

A Department for Transport study has revealed that the line between London Euston and Birmingham New Street, which passes through Northampton, is in the top 30 per cent of overcrowded trains in the country.

The 18:13 train from Euston has a 'load factor' of 162 per cent.

Shaun Hope, Northampton Rail Users' Group treasurer, said: "People in Northampton deserve a first-class service compared to the second-class one that they are receiving at the moment.

"We would hope that the HS2 on the West Coast mainline will improve the Northampton service.

"Overcrowded trains cannot be safe for the people using them. If anything happens then those people are at risk.

"At our last meeting we asked London Midland for an explanation as to why drivers were leaving but I do not think we got a satisfactory answer."

In a statement last week, London Midland said: 'Although we worked hard to ensure the shortage was addressed and resolved as quickly as possible, we recognise that recent disruption has been unacceptable to passengers.

"It is also not what we expect of ourselves and we are sorry for letting you down."

DELAYS: Commuters are being given free tickets

'Record' 999 calls from festive drinkers

THE ambulance service dealt with almost 2,400 emergency calls last Friday.

East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) received an extra 457 calls - and the majority of them were because of people drinking in excess.

EMAS said the record volumes continued into the early hours of the following morning. An EMAS spokesman said: "We geared up for a very busy night because the last Friday before Christmas is traditionally a time of high demand as people finish work and start to party.

"Sadly, many of the patients we dealt with had their night out spoilt and some will even be spending Christmas in hospital rather than with their family and friends.

"We expect the increase in demand to continue into the New Year and while we don't want to be killjoys, we'd urge people to drink sensibly to avoid the same problems happening to them." The public is reminded to only call 999 in life-threatening emergencies.

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Ravenous Rudolph shines brightly to help win record deal

A DIGITAL expert from Finedon has created an internet phenomenon called Ravenous Rudolph.

Lee Jackson, 30, who works for elliottyoung, was commissioned to produce a specially-branded online game for The Concord Music Group, based in Beverley Hills, to promote the label's new seasonal album 'Christmas Rules'. The business came in response to Lee sending out six festive-themed online games in October to potential customers giving them the option to customise the viral campaign for their own clients as a more engaging alternative to a traditional Christmas card.

Lee's agency, which is based on the Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire border at Technology Park, Thurleigh, was deluged with enquiries and quickly signed up a host of companies.

Lee said: "What started off as just a quirky campaign last year to our own customers, is quickly becoming a hugely exciting product for lots of new customers who are meeting elliottyoung for the first time this Christmas. We have been talking to some rather big companies, getting our foot in the door by way of offering some very clever marketing."

To play the games click here http://christmas.elliottyoung.co.uk

Flu jabs uptake is on the decline

BY SOPHIE SCOTT
sophie.scott@hpnorthants.co.uk

ALMOST 10,000 less people over 65 were vaccinated against flu this year compared to 2011.

Figures released by the Department of Health show that in September and October this year 55,559 people got the jab, while in the same period last year 64,906 got it.

The statistics from the Department of Health have also shown a decline in the number of people with long term conditions receiving the jab down from 24,370 last year to 19,555 this time.

There has been an increase in the number of pregnant woman receiving the jab up from 887 last year to 1,408 this year.

Anyone who falls into these categories receives the jab for free from their GP.

The NHS in Northamptonshire has warned that those who do not get the jab can risk their life as the illness can prove to be fatal.

Dr Olufunke Adedeji, consultant in public health at NHS Northamptonshire, said: "We want to remind people that even if you had the flu jab last year, you need it again this winter to ensure you are protected.

"The flu virus is constantly changing and last year's vaccine won't necessarily protect you from this year's virus."

Chief officer Liam Condron of Age UK Northamptonshire said: "We would encourage everyone over 65 to get the flu jab.

"Flu is not a mild disease and it can cause a stay in hospital and can even be fatal."

Anyone over 65 who is interested in getting the jab is encouraged to contact their GP.

For more information on the flu jab visit: www.northamptonshire.nhs.uk/flu

Metal detecting duo get Asbos for plundering Chester Farm

FOR the first time in England, two treasure hunters users have been given a suspended custodial sentence and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) by a court for carrying out illegal metal detecting activities on a protected site.

Peter Cox, 69, and Darren West, 51, both from Northamptonshire, were sentenced at Northampton Crown Court on December 19 to one year imprisonment, suspended for two years, after pleading guilty to stealing artefacts from and causing serious damage to a scheduled monument at Chester Farm, near Irchester.

This follows an investigation by a heritage crime partnership involving English Heritage, Northamptonshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the British Museum.

The sentences also included 150 hours of community service, a curfew, confiscation of metal detecting equipment, compensation for damage caused to the scheduled monument, and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders that restrict use of metal detecting equipment.

The monument at Chester Farm, owned by Northamptonshire County Council, includes Iron Age and medieval settlement remains but is most significant for its surviving remains of a Roman walled town that includes roads, temples and many other buildings.

Northamptonshire Police launched an investigation after two English Heritage officers witnessed the two men metal detecting at the site last July.

Damage had also been caused to the monument by the excavation of trenches, which had been illegally dug in search of artefacts.

The police arrested the men and conducted a raid at their homes.

Iron Age, Roman and medieval coins, metal artefacts and pottery, along with metal detecting equipment and documents relating to the scheduled monument were recovered.

Council chase lotto cash for key project

BY LAWRENCE JOHN
lawrence.john@hpnorthants.co.uk

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE County Council has been quick off the mark to try to scoop £4 million of Heritage Lottery Funding.

It has launched the public consultation process to move the £11m Chester Farm project forward so it can put in its bid by April.

Chester Farm, a heritage site located south-east of Wellingborough, sits beside the River Nene and in the parish of Irchester.

It comprises both an area of historic landscape, which dates back to Roman times, and a complex of buildings owned by Northamptonshire County Council - but is not yet accessible to the public.

The aim is to open up the whole site to visitors and develop it as somewhere people can learn more about the county's fascinating history and heritage, with opportunities to join in educational or volunteering activities.

FOR FUNDING: Chester Farm may benefit from lotto cash

This survey, supported by Heritage Lottery Fund backing, seeks views from members of the community as to how best this might be done.

It asks people whether they would visit the site, what sorts of activities they might like to see happening and whether they might like to participate in volunteering activities.

The results from the survey will inform plans for the future of Chester Farm and will be used to help prepare a further bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Archives manager at the county council, Sarah Bridges, said: "We now have £135,000 development funding which we will use to submit our plan. We want to find out what type of things people would like, if we offered educational visits would they come on guided tours?

"This is the type of evidence we want to include in our bid.

"We have two years to develop the bid but we are ambitious and want to get it in by April.

"We have already spent some money on the re-construction of the 17th century farm house and have capital money from the county council and Wellingborough Council to go into the pot.

"These are ambitious plans but we are keen to deliver them and that is why we want everyone to get involved and tell us what they want to see at Chester Farm."

Further details are available at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk or hard copies of the survey are available in (Northampton, Wellingborough and Irchester libraries, county council and Wellingborough offices.

The consultation ends on February, 18, and the results will be ready on March, 30.

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PRESENTS: Year 11 pupils with people from Serve

Students bring some festive cheer to those in need

FESTIVE parcels have been donated to pensioners and older people in need by school students.

More than 20 shoe boxes of food and toiletries were presented to Northamptonshire charity Serve. The charity provides support for about 6,000 older people in the Rushden area and East Northants.

The boxes were donated during their annual Christmas lunch party in the Manor Suite at the school in Mountbatten Way, Raunds.

Year 11 students, from Manor School Sports College, hosted the event and organised special activities including Christmas songs and bingo for those at the charity.

Liz Clarke, Prevention Service Coordinator at the charity, said: "We are so grateful to the students for the hamper collection. It is much appreciated and it's such a worthwhile cause.

"They look forward to the Christmas lunch and think it's absolutely wonderful as the students provide extra activities to entertain them as well." More information can be found at www.serve.

Man's fears over death of swans

BY LAWRENCE JOHN
lawrence.john@hpnorthants.co.uk

A CONCERNED member of the public fears swans may be being illegally killed and barbecued at the Embankment in Wellingborough.

The man, who did not wish to be named, contacted the *Herald & Post* as he was unhappy about what looked like birds' bones and white feathers strewn in places along one of the footpaths.

He believes fish are being poached from the river then cooked at barbecues on the river side and has seen evidence of beer cans dropped in the same location.

In an email he said: "The swan and fish bones and feathers are on the Nene Way footpath near the bank as you head towards Irthlingborough not far from the Embankment,

"This is near the weir and lock up to where the River Ise joins the Nene.

"I have seen evidence of barbecues and fires but the recent floods have removed this. The problem was worse in the summer. I had even seen people barbecuing fish taken from the Nene right on the Embankment

"I regularly see swan feathers and the carcasses of fish and swans near the bank as well as evidence of fires/disposable barbecues and lots of beer cans etc.

A spokesman for the Environment Agency said: "We urge anybody who has seen perceived illegal fishing activity to contact us immediately.

"The Environment Agency aims to prosecute anybody caught killing or stealing fish.

"We have had no recent reports of illegal poaching on the Wellingborough Embankment.

"We would urge anybody who sees any suspected illegal fishing to call The Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111. We maintain a strong presence patrolling all rivers in England and Wales, including unannounced blitzes, and work closely with resident angling clubs to help ensure no fishing laws are broken." The incidents have not been reported to the RSPCA.

A spokesperson for the animal charity said: "We would urge people to contact the charity's cruelty line on 0300 1234 999 if people suspect that incidents of cruelty are being carried out against wildlife in the area."

A spokesman for Northamptonshire Police said: "Our Wildlife team have not been getting reports about poaching issues around swans and fishes.

"We have done joint work with the Environment Agency in relation to illegal fishing.

"Sadly some swans have been dying through disease/natural causes as well as fox attacks and the latter often makes the death look suspicious. Anyone with concerns should contact us on 101."

Reward reaches £400 in attempt to catch cat killers

THREE animal lovers from across the county have added an extra £300 to a reward fund to catch the person or people responsible for blowing up a cat with a firework.

An initial reward of £100 had been put up by 72-year-old cat lover Maureen Cook from Northampton and her actions have inspired Anne Stacey, Marlene Elderton and Dave from Wellingborough to add additional money.

The incident they are angry about happened on Bonfire weekend and was witnessed by a mother and her daughter in Shelley Road.

Bonnie's brother Buster was killed the same night by a car as he sat by the body of his feline sister.

All three people hope the person or person who carried out this crime will be caught by police and the reward will help in the process.

Witnesses to this incident, or anyone with information, should call Northamptonshire Police on 101.

Alternatively information can be given to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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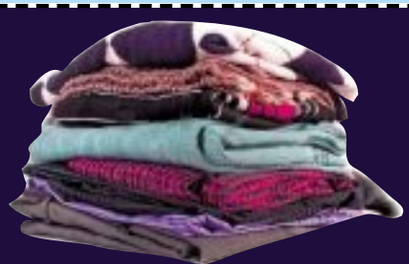

Panto proposal is met with a fairytale ending

BY LAWRENCE JOHN
lawrence.john@hpnorthants.co.uk

A DENTIST from Northamptonshire made sure his 'princess' shall go to the ball when he proposed to his girlfriend in front of 1,000 people at the end of a performance of Cinderella on Saturday.

Vishal Patel, 27, decided he would make the visit to the pantomime at Royal & Derngate a day to remember for Heena Pindoria, 27, when he 'popped the question' watched from the stage by a real life fairy godmother in the shape of Denise Welch.

Not only did Vishal get down on his bended knee to ask for Heena's hand in marriage, but he was watched by 12 members of his family including his two sisters and his brother-in-law.

Vishal had planned this special day well in advance and let the theatre know what he was planning to do.

So at the end of the show at 3.15pm Fairy Godmother Denise picked out the couple with the help of a spotlight and her 11-year-old son Louie, who also appears in the production, took Vishal a microphone so he could ask the important question.

I DO: Vishal and Heena on stage

Vishal said: "I am happy I did it but beforehand I was not looking forward to it as I was feeling a mixture of nerves and apprehension.

"I knew Heena would love it and it is one of those things which we'll never forget.

"This has been the best experience of my life and when we have a family it will be a lovely story to look back on.

"I can't thank Royal & Derngate for helping out and the Herald & Post for getting involved.

"I had the engagement ring specially made. It has been custom-made and on Friday I had to travel from Northampton to London to fetch it.

"It was a fair distance to go but it was worth it.

"What we did on Saturday night was to go out and have a meal together."

The couple, who have been together since they met at Brunel University, are aiming to get married in 2014.

Vishal said he would be asking both Bobby Davro and Denise Welch if they would come to his and Heena's wedding.

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Managing Director
Mike Richardson
mike.richardson@lsnmedia.co.uk

EDITORIAL:
Editor:
Chris Gill
01604 614606
chris.gill@hpnorthants.co.uk

Newsdesk: 01604 614636
Leisure: 01604 614634
Sports desk: 01604 614632

ADVERTISING:
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PCC Adam has 'failed at the first post'

I WOULD like to address the following comments to Adam Simmonds.

When the new position of Police and Crime Commissioner was first mooted, I was not wholly convinced that there was a problem that needed to be fixed.

But come the day, I dutifully cast my vote for the person I believed would do the best job for the people of Northamptonshire.

Perhaps I should state that my vote didn't go your way, but I only voted for the independent candidate because he had no political allegiance.

You won the election, fair and square, and so we look to you to step up to the plate and deliver on the government's promises.

Then you go and let us all down at the very first opportunity. Where we all expected you to have empathy with and understanding of our desire to see things done properly, transparently and without favour, you immediately appoint your cronies to very highly paid positions.

The positions should have been advertised and open to all.

The salaries should have been set at realistic levels, ensuring value for money for the taxpayers of Northampton. You showed complete disregard to our right to fairness.

Subsequent comments by your team continued to pour scorn on the electorate.

In a world where the ordinary, long-suffering man and woman are sick to the back teeth of being dumped on by people in power, you missed a golden opportunity to show us you really meant what you said – at length – in your manifesto.

Instead, you fell at the first fence.

You really don't get it, do you?

Chris Phillipson
Wootton Fields, Northampton

NEW JOB: Adam Simmonds was elected last month

No faith in new cop boss yet

I WAS astonished to read in the *Herald & Post* (December 6) that the new Police and Crime Commissioner had appointed his 'friends' to new, high paid jobs in his department.

Hasn't he heard of the Nolan Report about standards of conduct in public life? He should read it.

I worked for 40 years in the public and charitable sectors. All jobs were advertised and more senior roles were subject to a rigorous selection process to ensure we only appointed the most competent people.

After all, if someone is paid £50,000 per year and stays in the job for five years the organisation is investing £250,000 in that one person, in salary alone, so it's essential to make the right choice. How can the PCC consider spending our money building up his 'empire' when public services everywhere are being cut?

It is difficult to have confidence in this new PCC if he shows such disregard for standards and financial discipline so early on in his role.

Rod Giddins
Tewkesbury Close, Northampton

Turn our street lights back on

AS a law abiding 68-year-young female widowed pensioner, having moved into Kingsthorpe this year, I am horrified at the lack of street lighting.

While we live in a fast becoming nanny state I consider it my right as a council taxpayer to be able to visit my local shop as and when I please in sufficient lighting to make that possible.

Is safety no longer considered? I realise there is a common mistaken image of someone like myself, just how wrong is that?

Most mornings I walk into Kingsthorpe and back (about two miles). I have joined the local gym, swim each week, carry out some charity work, am a self taught user of the computer and am writing my second novel.

I am completely of the generation brought up to help ourselves, which due to the appalling lack of lighting, prevents me from going out at night for a walk.

This is not the USA where walking is a rarity, believe it or not this is still the UK where so much is talked about keeping fit.

I feel humiliated by this and hope that common sense will prevail and at least some of our darker areas will be quickly relit enabling me to be as independent as I have always been.

Shame on Northamptonshire County Council for its total lack of consideration and indeed common sense by reducing the street lighting to such a dreadful degree.

Don't just read the emails, get out and about and look for yourselves.

By the way don't forget to bring the torch! What a total insult. I recall doing this in the 1950s - so this is progress? I really don't think so, are we not living in the 21st century?

Wake up Northants Council and kindly relight our streets. Never before have I felt the need to write to any council but enough is enough.

I would welcome an email from Councillor Ogden (but won't hold my breath). Come and see for yourself.

Margaret Peterson
By email

Using a torch can be dangerous

I NOTED the comment about taking a torch - fine BUT I am not allowed to park at my work place anymore and it's more than two miles away. The buses are very expensive, and I still need to run a car (some of my grandchildren are 90 miles away and the trains and national express do not go there directly).

Therefore I walk. I sometimes have shopping to carry home and if it's raining I am holding an umbrella too - therefore is it suggested I put the torch in my mouth? Also I am not sure you feel safe with just the ray of the torch light. I go past areas of 'wild' bits and there are lots of shadows, not comfortable at all.

Also the car lights can distort the torch light and there are so many bad path areas it's easy to turn your ankle as services everywhere are being cut?

Lynne Stokes
By email

letters policy

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Your comments from our website . . .

NBC budget consultation opens

■ **They should consider more outsourcing solutions eg. HR/Legal, Payroll, IT - or cost sharing with eg. Birmingham/Nottingham/ Cambridge.**
David Morgan

Seized horses looking for home

■ It's about time! These poor horses are totally neglected. Rarely are they given food, water and shelter.
Elizabeth

Street light switch-off row

■ **Other counties have cottoned on and are replacing lights with LED to save power but still provide enough light even if they turn off every second light it would be better than no light.**
Adam

Wellingborough Prison closure

■ Oh great let's close the third cheapest prison in the country, then reopen it after moving all the staff, even completely out of area at the taxpayers' expense and then open it again after building new wings.
Debbie

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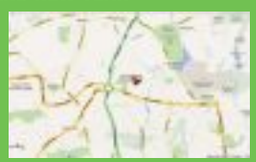

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	8.00 - 9.00	NEW JIU JITSU WITH FARAD
WED:	1.10 - 1.50	THAI BO 'BUTTS N GUTS'
	5.15 - 6.00	THAI BO
	8.00 - 9.15	SELF DEFENCE AIKIDO
THURS:	10.30 - 11.30	TAI CHI
	1.15 - 1.45	DAN'S BOOT CAMP
	6.00 - 7.00	LEGS BUMS AND TUMS
	7.00 - 8.00	ZUMBA
	8.00 ,- 9.00	JIU JITSU
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Cops' warning over illegal raves

POLICE are asking farmers and those who live and work in the countryside to keep their eyes and ears open in case illegal raves take place over the holiday.

Officers would like to encourage reports of any suspicious circumstances, such as cars acting suspiciously, driving around slowly looking at fields, outbuildings and barns, and any potential marking of locations, such as paint marks on the road surface or ribbons on gates and in hedges.

Cops are determined to maintain their robust approach to raves – but need support from members of the public to nip these events in the bud.

A police spokeswoman said: "The festive season is ideal for those people looking to stage these type of events over a number of days.

"People who organise or attend an illegal rave are committing an offence and are likely to cause annoyance or even danger to other people living in the area, damaging property or endangering wildlife.

"The key is to let us know of any suspicious movements involving individuals or vehicles in your community - early information is vital."

Police said tell-tale signs of a possible rave being organised are:

- Posters or messages advertising an event
- Locks and chains on fields cut or tampered with
- Large convoys of cars on quiet rural roads
- Sound equipment and tents being set up
- Power generators being hired and brought into rural locations
- Flattened or disturbed hedgerows

If you have information or concerns about potential raves, report them using the non-emergency police number, 101.

The Sally Army are a family for those all alone

BY LAWRENCE JOHN
lawrence.john@hpnorthants.co.uk

TWO days ago we all celebrated Christmas.

The majority of us sat down to have a festive lunch surrounded by loved ones, our family and friends.

But on December 25, did you give a thought to the homeless or the lonely? The answer is probably no and while this is nothing to be ashamed of, it seems to be the way things are in the modern world.

But one group of people who did care at Christmas was the Salvation Army and in particular those involved with the Northampton East Corps, Penistone Road in Northampton.

This branch of what is lovingly called 'The Sally Army' had a busy Christmas which started on December 1 and culminated two days ago with a community Christmas lunch.

On Tuesday, members of the Salvation Army band started the morning by playing carols at Cynthia Spencer Hospice and then headed off to Northampton General Hospital to spread some more festive joy.

One of the people who was committed to saving Christmas for those less fortunate than us was Captain Carl Huggins who has been involved with the Salvation Army for 14 years, having served in Ayr, Airdrie, Lincolnshire and Northampton East.

He said: "What happened on Christmas Day was we held a community party to which 100 people were invited. These included the homeless plus those who were lonely as they have no family or friends.

"We have always been there for those less fortunate and we are their surrogate family. I have two young children and on Christmas Day they, along with my wife Major Michelle, we spent the day there. It was a good thing to help others less fortunate as I do get a spiritual reward and it gives me respect."

Anyone who can help the Salvation Army should called the Northampton East Corps on 01604 405137.

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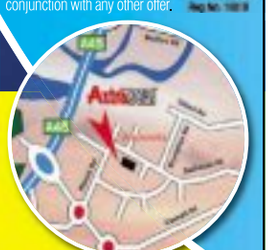

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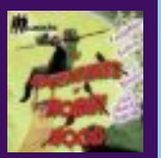
Oddsocks shake up the traditional tale of Robin Hood, so be prepared for laughter, live music, action and audience participation!
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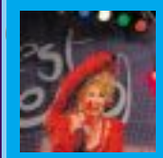
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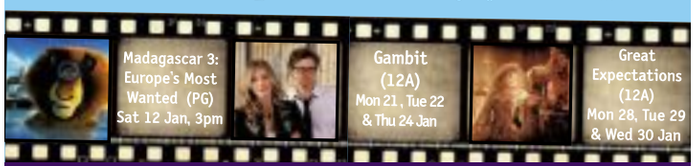

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Let's take a trip back

AS it comes to the end of 2012, we take a look at the stories that have hit the headlines in Northamptonshire this year.

ERRORS: The police watchdog ruled that the Northants force made a catalogue of errors in the Ding family murders case. *See March*

BLAZE: Fat Cats bar went up in flames. *See January*

January

- AS the new year was welcomed in, tragedy struck when an historic building in Northampton town centre went up in flames. The blaze broke out in Fat Cats in Bridge Street - which is still closed to two-way traffic as a result.

- A shopkeeper and his son fought off a gang of crowbar wielding men in Raunds. Dinesh Gorania, 50, and son Kishan, 21, were confronted by the robbers as they were closing.

- We told how the East Midlands Ambulance Service had splashed out £8 million on reinforced emergency vehicles to cope with heavier patients.

February

- NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Police announced it was to cut 450 jobs over the next four years.

- Wellingborough Council outlawed lap dancing clubs over fears it could promote prostitution in the town. The committee's ruling means that lap dancing, pole dancing, table dancing, strip shows, peep shows and/or live sex shows will be forbidden.

- Ex-Cobblers player Leon McKenzie was jailed for six months for a speeding scam. He submitted fake letters claiming his car was in a garage in London when it had been caught speeding.

March

- THE police watchdog (the IPCC) ruled that Northamptonshire Police made a 'catalogue of errors' in response to a 999 call during the murder of the Ding family in April 2011. It said vital time was wasted when a call was made by one of the victims during the murder. Jifeng Ding, Ge Chui and their daughters, Xing and Alice, were stabbed to death in their home in Pioneer Close, Northampton.

- Police launched an investigation after six women were sexually assaulted as they walked alone in Wellingborough.

- A Florida teenager was jailed for life for gunning down Northampton tourist James

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to the start of 2012

GUN VICTIM: James Kouzaris. See March

CHARGE: Leon McKenzie. See February

ROYAL FUN: Jubilee celebrations. See June

Kouzaris and his friend James Cooper. Shawn Tyson, 17, was convicted of first-degree murder.

April

- A TEENAGER killed herself after the tragic murders of the Ding family left her devastated, an inquest found. Natasha Warnes, 16, took a drug overdose and suffocated herself in July 2011. She was a close friend of 18-year-old Xing Ding.

- A man was jailed for the manslaughter of Raunds dad Kevin Harrison. Mr Harrison, 48, died after he suffered a catastrophic brain injury from one punch by Ravi Sandhu, 24, in Bedford.

May

- ASHLEIGH Butler and her dog Pudsey won ITV's Britain's Got Talent competition. The duo, from Wellingborough, danced their way through the stages to win a chance to perform in front of the Queen.

- Five-year-old Niamh Curry from Wellingborough lost her battle against cancer. In December 2010 Niamh was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called Neuroblastoma. Her family set up Niamh's Next Step appeal for her and continue to raise funds.

- Stephen Moonesamy, 35, of Lowlands Close, Northampton was arrested by police for conning 75 dance students across the county into thinking they had the chance to perform at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games.

June

- DEVELOPERS Legal & General said the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment was not 'economically viable' and put the £250 million plans on hold.

- Mum Lynette Goodman spoke to the *Herald & Post* of the 'devastation' she felt in discovering that one of her twin sons had accidently killed his brother. Ryan, 19, admitted pushing his twin Michael and left his body in undergrowth near the family's Spanish villa.

- People from across the county celebrated the Queen's Jubilee - with an extra day off work and street parties galore. It was the start of a memorable summer - which saw the Olympics come to Northamptonshire. But, more on that next week. . .

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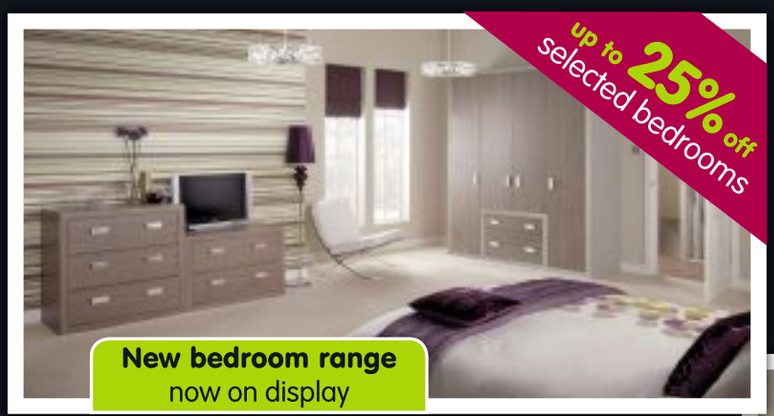

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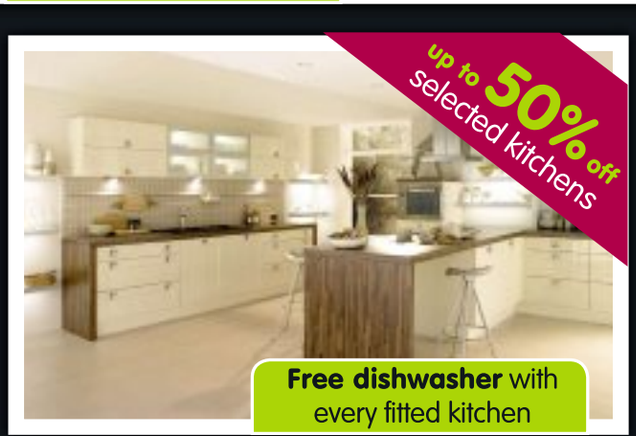

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MEDIUM build, black female, 52, likes reading, meals out, travel, cooking, seeks honest male, 50 plus for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393922**

AMY 31yr old single mum new to the area looking to meet male companion to help make me settle in and feel special again, age/status unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400197**

TONI single mum 34yrs, petite, attractive, likes nights in or out, desperate not to spend Christmas at home alone, looking for similar lonely companion. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400157**

BROOKE 21yr old blue eyed babe looking for mature male who can accommodate for social meets hopefully leading to more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400121**

BLONDE lady, 50, attractive, size 20, seeking, honest, funny man for companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400061**

TALL dark, slim female, caring, honest, seeking male for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393592**

CAREN 24yr old single mum looking for her mature Mr Right for mutual spoiling, love and respectful adult times. 35-45yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398811**

TESS 38yr old attractive blonde, N/S, intelligent, seeks honest, romantic, N/S professional v.discreet male in a similar position of neglect as me. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398809**

71YR old female, seeking caring gent, 71-75 for drinks, meals out and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399021**

LOUISE early 40's, seeks male, 45-5- for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398955**

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PETITE Pisces female, early 70's, caring, loving, kind, GSOH, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, gardening, looking for nice male, mid 60's plus for friendship, maybe more. Northampton area. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 389985**

ATTRACTIVE female, 44, 5ft 3ins, likes pets, cooking, music, walks, seeks kind, caring, genuine male, 40's for lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398411**

TAFFY very beautiful foreign lady, 32, looking for quality times without complications with much older mature and well-mannered male. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399721**

NINA sensual black beauty seeking white prince for fun times, OHAC, fit body and lots to offer an open minded tactile guy. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399531**

ACTIVE independent female, widow, 75, N/S, house owner, seeks gent of similar age to share lunches, outings and friendship. Must be car owner. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399703**

DEE 44, seeks male, 45-50 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399555**

PRETTY female, dark blue eyes, fair hair, 5ft 7ins, curvy, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399453**

JEANETTE 28yr old shopaholic looking for some extra circular activities with mature man who knows how to treat a diva, my place or yours? **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399191**

KAY blonde hair, blue eyes, 5ft 4ins, medium build, 60's, likes socialising, swimming, meals out, seeks tall male, 60-70 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397329**

LESLEY young free spirited single female, professional with OHAC, looking for someone to have some fun with, in or out. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397575**

SLIM professional female seeking similar professional male 30-40yrs for fun times only, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397571**

KIND caring, loving female, 48, seeking male for romance, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393392**

MARY Anne, attractive, blonde, blue/green eyes, tactile romantic, cultured, seeks similar male, 55-65 with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398703**

OLIVIA classy 30's lady looking for mature male with a good imagination and open-minded approach to relationships. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398513**

BABS young 40's female desperately seeking decent man to help mend my broken heart, repair my bruised ego, and rebuild my self-esteem. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398487**

ELLA slim confident brunette, tired of spending lonely nights alone, seeking honest, romantic male to enjoy nights out, hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398943**

WIDOW 5ft 7ins, blue eyes, well dressed, genuine, caring, lovable, bubbly, seeks genuine, kind, honest male, 60-70, N/S for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398395**

JANE pretty brunette, large build, loves to cook up a treat, seeking kind male who wants to be spoilt rotten, for love in return. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398493**

SANDY very attractive fun loving Spanish female, busty size 12, likes most things, seeking N/S mature male to take this loneliness away. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397573**

MARIA young 50, widow, 5ft 7ins, medium build, shoulder length blonde hair, brown eyes, likes pubs, clubs, meals out, cinema, swimming, dvds, dog walks, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397793**

PROFESSIONAL retired lady, 5ft 7ins, blue eyes, smart, likes meals out, music, holidays, seeks genuine, caring, loving gent, 60-70, N/S for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398771**

SALLY 37 genuine, loving, loyal, likes animals, country walks, cinema, nights in, seeks kind, loyal male, 40-60 for friendship, possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393124**

LISA 18yr old very curvy big-busted female looking for likeminded playmate. Age/looks/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397569**

SUE blonde blue eyed slim but curvy attractive female, likes a good movie with nice bottle of wine, WLTM likeminded genuine male. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397565**

YOUNG at heart lady, 68, GSOH, likes dining out, dancing, weekends away, seeks male of similar age, must be genuine. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398855**

I'M Lyn, 38yrs, size 14, attractive, a little shy, looking for confident male to bring out my sensual and feminine side. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397455**

LISA tall leggy size 14 WLTM trustworthy guy with GSOH, hopefully in uniform, to enjoy role play with a full bodied bottle of red! **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397401**

FEMALE 57, looking for N/S, honest, trustworthy male for friendship, possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 396879**

STACY curvy brunette 33yrs in a bit of a pickle, looking for likeminded man in her life, any age, for fun meets. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 394119**

SARAH 35 recently divorced, slim 5ft 7ins, pretty, seeks male up to 50yrs for meals out hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 392493**

HAVE all the best guys really been taken? Blonde, slim, gorgeous, professional and in my prime! What are you waiting for? **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397119**

WIDOW 62, N/S, brown hair, 5ft 9ins, many interests, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 396733**

60YR old female, young looks, divorced, loving, medium build, brown eyes, likes music, cooking, nights in/out, walks, seeks male, 45-60. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 396183**

PEGGY 61, widow, smoker, varied interests, likes country life, WLTM male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 385297**

JANE professional redhead with a mischievous side, looking for similar professional younger male to tame me, or maybe not! Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 380865**

FED up with the Olympics already? Bored female seeking fun distractions with likeminded male. Looks unimportant. Can accommodate/travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 394477**

LADY 56, honest, caring, loving, many interests, divorced, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 396737**

JO newly divorced, new to dating, perfect size 10, OHAC, solvent, looking for some fun times with younger male. Can accommodate, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397015**

KELLY mature 19yr old with no ties, looking for adult fun with fit older male who can keep me entertained. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395731**

ANGELA romantic, honest, caring, reliable, 60's, attractive, cuddly, seeking reliable, trustworthy male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395147**

HI Jem, 37 GSOH, looking for mutually convenient friendship and day/eve meets with professional male. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395723**

SUSIE is a 32yrs old lady, open to meet a guy for some fun times. Call to hear more or for a chat. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395647**

PAM 39yr old green eyed female looking for 50 Shades of Grey romance, come on lets have some fun. Discretion assured/required. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 394671**

ANGIE bubbly female with GSOH, looking to put some fun back into my life with similar aged tactile male. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 394661**

SLIM 50's, blonde lady, N/S, likes antiques, walks, music, gardening, seeking kind, happy guy 45-60 with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393957**

KAREN 49, seeks gent for friendship and outings, theatre, meals out, seaside. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395257**

FEMALE likes walks, meals out, DIY, nights in, seeking male friend, 56-68. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395011**

men seeking women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

Ladies Text n' Chat. Text in now and chat to local people. Send : CHAT836 To : 65125 (T&C's below)

SID 70, likes golf, shopping, meals out, days out, seeks fit, active lady of similar age. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400401**

MALE 48, likes keep fit, walks, picnics, wining/dining, active, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400381**

RETIRED 64yr old male, smoker, seeking female, 50-70, any size/colour to share passionate kisses, cuddles and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400325**

VERY caring male, 47, likes cinema, meals out, concerts, travel, seeks loving lady, 35-50 with similar interests for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400285**

ANDY 5ft 7ins, medium build, brown hair, easygoing, good listener, likes keep fit, walks, holidays, meals out, seeks similar female, 35-50 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400057**

RICARDO attractive 38, faithful, seeks female for lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400215**

45YR old male, 5ft 10ins, short hair, dark eyes, seeks female, 29-50 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400163**

GENUINE 72yr old male, 5ft 4ins, medium build, friendly, easygoing, likes gardening, travel, DIY, bowling, GSOH, seeking female. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400055**

MICHAEL 48, likes pubs, clubs, meals out, country walks, looking for nice female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400047**

KIND male, 47, enjoys cinema, meals out, concerts, travel, seeks loving lady, 35-50 with similar interests for loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 400017**

DARREN 43, loving, caring, seeks female for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399937**

PROFESSIONAL male, 37, seeks discreet playmate for daytime fun and frolics. Age/status/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399857**

IDEAL Xmas present. Genuine male, young 54, divorced, kind, caring, loyal, honest, seeks similar female for LTR, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399503**

MALE 69, seeks lady for meals in/out, days out, walks, happy times, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399379**

MALE easy going, 53, medium build, caring, romantic, likes nights in/out, fun loving, seeks similar female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399023**

53YR old male, fun, fit, healthy, looking for fun, bubbly, black female, 55-75 for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399087**

MATURE male, 50ish, GSOH, seeks shapely female for fun times. Ipswich. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398993**

HARLOW male, 39, down to earth, outgoing, seeks female for fun, nights in/out, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398979**

KIND male, 47, likes cinema, meals out, concerts, travel, seeks loving lady with similar interests, 35-50 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398961**

ALAN 28 seeking female for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398591**

NORTHANTS male, 50, slim, fit, attractive, genuine, caring, easy going, no ties, GSOH, OHAC, likes animals, art, seeks caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398155**

KIND male, 47, enjoys cinema, meals out, concerts, travel, seeks loving lady, 35-50 with similar interests for loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398375**

MICK 75, no car, seeking female for companionship and a nice Sunday dinner. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398929**

YOUNGER looking than my teenager in the 70's age, blue eyes, blond, would like to buy you a meal, semi-retired, would you like to go to Spain with me? **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398537**

59YR old male, caring, loving, seeking female 60ish for loving, tender relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393370**

5FT 8ins male, 15st, blue eyes, fair hair, active, looking for tactile lady, 65-72. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398175**

MALE 70's throwback, likes music, just complete college course, seeks similar or younger in Northants. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398103**

GEORGE 57, 6ft, slim, easy-going, solvent, likes walks, music, reading, log fires etc., seeks lady with similar interests, 47-60. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398083**

CHARLIE seeking female, 30-45 for no strings discreet fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 395961**

BILL 72, caring, loving, honest, affectionate, likes DIY, gardening, cinema, TV, country pubs, seeks female of similar age for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 397947**

ATTRACTIVE romantic, faithful 38yr old guy seeks caring, fun female for Xmas and lasting relationship, to be my princess. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399291**

DIVORCED guy 38, tall, brown hair, looking for friendship and fun with lady, 18-60. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393646**

LADIES don't be lonely this Xmas. Male 55, medium build, looking for special Xmas cracker for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399165**

ESSEX male, 62, enjoy home life, reading, music, travel, OHAC, seeking lady, 40-60 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399109**

NORTHAMPTON man, 66, N/S, widower, many interests, likes meals out/in, seeks similar aged female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399051**

GENUINE 71yr old male, friendly, likes gardening, travel, DIY, bowling, seeks nice lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399677**

MALE young 56, looking for somebody nice. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399665**

LIFE begins at 60. Nice natured, attractive, modern male, GSOH, professional, seeks stylish female for friendship and a fun future. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399661**

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58YR old slim, Northampton bi male, seeks similar bi/CD male for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399445**

MALE 50, seeking elderly gent, 75-85 for friendship/companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 399413**

37YR old male, seeks male for no strings fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 393590**

DAVE 48, caring, N/S, cuddly build, looking for fun times with male up to 65. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 390185**

IAN bi-curious male, 61, seeks male for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 387524**

MICHAEL 61, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 396449**

EARLY 40's male, 5ft 5ins, brown eyes, tanned, attractive, likes horse racing, motorbikes, shopping, walks, beach, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 396727**

NICK 39, double XL build, 5ft 10ins, seeks CD/TV/bi/gay male for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 5817 Box No: 398377**

Women TEXT FOR FUN!

*see t&c's below. No meetings implied or guaranteed. **Texts cost £1.50** per message Help Desk: **0844 445 7707**

GUYS TEXT FOR FUN. SEND LSNN followed by the box number of the person you wish to chat to and send to **66888** (T&C's below)

50Yr old Christian brunette, attractive, friendly, lonely, likes bowling, reading, cooking, outdoor life**. Text LSNN 154567 to 66888**

BEAUTIFUL thing, attractive lady, n/s, beautician, enjoys fashion, antique fairs, days out & country drives. Want to know more. Text me. **Text LSNN 159134 to 66888**

FUN blue eyed blonde, a little dizzy at times but a big bundle of fun. **Text LSNN 163788 to 66888**

HEY guys! My interests include music, reading, tattoos, cooking, hanging out with mates and many more things. Text me! **Text LSNN 168355 to 66888**

I AM an adventurous, outgoing and loyal person. I enjoy going places and trying new things I am a very active person. **Text LSNN 172922 to 66888**

FUN, bubbly, happy go lucky, single, mummy, work hard, play hard, friends, family, horse, gym, wine, movies, random nights **Text LSNN 218842 to 66888**

I LOVE going out and having a laugh. Im new to all this, so be patient lol. **Text LSNN 182056 to 66888**

Men TEXT FOR FUN!

*see t&c's below. No meetings implied or guaranteed. **Texts cost £1.50** per message Help Desk: **0844 445 7707**

LADIES TEXT FOR FUN. SEND LSNN followed by the box number of the person you wish to chat to and send to **66888** (T&C's below)

DIVORCED Male 59, VGSOH, n/s easy-going, enjoy music, poker, cooking, watch football, having a pint in a local pub. **Text LSNN 488556 to 66888**

I LOVE the arts, countryside and eating out. Honest, sensuous, with lots to share and give. **Text LSNN 493123 to 66888**

I HAVE many interests but derive pleasure from everyday things,whether it be a walk in the park or a coffee by the river. **Text LSNN 497690 to 66888**

ROMANTIC guy. I have many interests, but derive pleasure from everyday things, whether it be a walk in a park or coffee by the river. **Text LSNN 502257 to 66888**

SPORTY gentleman. 46 yo I have a fun friendly chatty personality! Drop me a line :) **Text LSNN 506824 to 66888**

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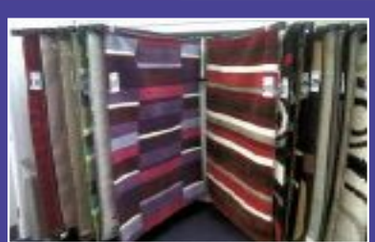

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It's a Scenic view from this 'satisfying' Renault

MPVs used to be strict advocates of the form-follows-function principle - to the extent they could end up looking, well, a bit dull to say the least.

Earlier generations of the Renault Grand Scenic range were in danger of falling into that trap but over the years it has become a suaver-looking thing and the most recent changes put style firmly on the agenda.

You could argue that being attractive never hurts. MPVs may be taller and bulkier than their hatchback siblings, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't be good to drive. In the Scenic's case, its Megane-based chassis is a real plus.

The MacPherson strut front suspension is linked to an innovative horned sub-frame that helps to reduce lateral movement and gives more precise steering responses.

The rear set-up is based around a tough torsen beam and, together, the two systems help the Scenic achieve a very low specific roll angle for a compact MPV.

The upshot is composed cornering and a supple ride that soaks up the ravages of poorly maintained roads with impressive calm but little of the body lean that can cause queasiness among passengers.

The electric power steering has also been tweaked to be more accurate and responsive.

Add cleaner and more frugal engines and the latest driver-aid tech and it's clear that the Grand Scenic packs the appeal of a car that continues to offer competitive space, a wide array of useful features and Megane-derived chassis dynamics to satisfy the keen driver.

Few rivals indeed are as well-rounded.

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2004 (53) BMW 730D SE Auto, met black, full black leather heated electric seats, sat nav, phone, electric windows, mirrors, seats, m/f/s/wheel, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, radio/CD + changer, fully loaded, FSH, 98,000 miles **£7,495**

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2007 (07) BMW X5 3.0D SE Auto, met silver, black leather seats, electric seats, mirrors, windows, heated seats, sat nav, bluetooth, side steps, media and dynamic pack, 19" alloys, 7 seats, m/f/s/wheel, fully loaded, FSH, 76,000 miles **£18,495**

2006 (55) RANGE ROVER SPORT 2.7 HSE Auto, met silver, full black heated, electric, memory sports seats, sat nav, bluetooth, m/f/s/wheel, ABS, a/bags, alloys, Xenon headlamps, f.l.r.s.h., 74,000 miles, very clean **£17,995**

2004 (54) TOYOTA RAV 4 2.0 D4D XT3 Diesel, met silver, grey cloth trim, electric windows, mirrors, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, a/con, FSH, only 62,000 miles, very clean ..... **SOLD**

2005 (05) LAND ROVER Freelander 2.0 TD4 Auto HSE, met silver, full black leather trim, heated seats, electric windows, mirrors, s/roof, m/f/s/wheels, harman kardon sound system, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, full service history, 90,000 miles **£5,995**

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2009 (59) BMW 520D 'M' Sport Business Edition Auto, met black, full black leather seats, electric windows, mirrors, sat nav, bluetooth, body kit, 18" alloys, PAS, ABS, a/bags, m/f/s/wheel, climate control, a/con, cruise control, f.b.m.s.h, 62,000 miles **£15,995**

2003 (03) PORSCHE 996 Carerra 2, met blue, full blue leather trim, climate control, air con, sat nav, phone, PSM, PAS, ABS, 18" Carerra alloys, radio/CD, FSH, 80,000 miles, very clean **£14,995**

2009 (59) BMW 123D 'M' Sport, 5 dr, met black, full black leather sport trim, glass sunroof, sat nav, bluetooth, computer, electric windows, mirrors, m/f/s/wheel, F.B.M.W.S., 58,000 miles, 1 owner, rear park sensors **£14,495**

2004 (54) AUDI A3 2.0 TDi Sport, met black, full leather sport seats, climate control, air con, electric windows mirrors, airbags, PAS, ABS, alloys, cruise control, FSH, 70,000 miles, very clean **£6,995**

HATCHBACKS

2008 (58) VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 Life Auto, met black, black cloth trim, electric windows, mirrors, air con, PAS, ABS, a/bags, radio/CD, FSH, only 40,000 miles **£4,995**

CONVERTIBLES

1999 (V) PORSCHE 996 3.4 Convertible Auto Tip, met black, full grey leather seats, electric windows, mirrors, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, FSH, 75,000 miles, Hard Top **£12,995**

2005 (05) BMW 318i Sport Cab, met blue, full grey leather heated electric seats, electric windows, mirrors, roof, m/f/s/wheel, radio/CD, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, FSH, 78,000 miles, very clean **£5,995**

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DIESEL

2005 (05) AUDI A4 2.0 TDi S Line, met black, full leather trim, climate control, a/con, electric windows, mirror, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, 6 speed manual, radio/CD, FSH, 92,000 miles **£6,995**

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ESTATE

2001 (Y) AUDI A6 2.5 TDi Quattro Est, met grey, full black leather trim, electric windows, mirrors, climate control, air con, 6 speed manual, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, radio/CD + changer, xenon headlamps, FSH, 106,000 miles **£4,995**

PART EXCHANGE

2001 (Y) MERCEDES CLK 230 Kompressor Avantgarde Auto, met dark blue, full grey leather, alloys, PAS, ABS, m/f/s/wheel, air con, radio/CD, FSH, 102,000 miles **£2,450**

2001 (51) PEUGEOT 206 1.4 Quicksilver 3dr, met silver, black cloth trim, electric windows, mirrors, PAS, ABS, a/con, radio/CD, alloys, FSH, 88,000 miles **£1,995**

2002 (02) PEUGEOT 206 1.4 LX, 5 dr, met black, cloth trim, a/con, electric windows, mirrors, PAS, ABS, a/bags, radio/CD, c/locking, FSH, 92,000 miles **£1,995**

2002 (52) FORD FOCUS 2.0 Ghia 5dr, met silver, cloth trim, climate control, air-con, radio/CD, electric windows, mirrors, PAS, ABS, a/bags, alloys, heated front w/screen, FSH **£1,995**

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Mondeo 1.8 TDCi 125 Titanium 5dr 59reg 59k, 6speed etc £8,799
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 D Luxury 4dr Auto 10reg 33k, Leather, Nav £19,599
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 D Luxury 4dr Auto 59reg 31k, Leather, Nav £18,599

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Passat 2.0 TDi 140 Highline 4dr 59reg 63k, Leather etc £8,999
Passat 2.0 TDi 140 Highline 4dr 09reg 63k, Leather etc £8,599
Passat 2.0 TDi 110 Highline 59reg 32k, Leather etc £10,299
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BMW 320 D 177 SE Touring Estate 59reg 76k, Leather, Nav £12,399
BMW 318 D 143 SE Touring Estate 59reg 60k, Black, 6speed £12,299
BMW 318 D 143 SE Touring Estate 59reg Only 36k!!, 6speed £13,999
BMW 318 D 143 ES Touring Estate 59reg 50k, Black, 6speed £12,199
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Fusion 1.4 Style + Semi Auto 5dr 59reg 20k, air con etc £4,999
Focus 1.6 TDCi Econetic 110 59reg 60k, £30/year tax!!! £7,499
Focus 1.6 TDCi Style Estate 58reg 72k, White, £30/year tax!! £5,999
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Mondeo 2.0 TDCi ECOnetic Estate 59reg 46k, 6speed £8,499
X-Type 2.0D S Estate 09reg 64k £8,799
Merc C200 CDi SE Estate 09reg 74k £9,999
Note 1.6 Tekna Auto 5dr 09reg 24k, Sat Nav etc £6,999
Note 1.4 Acenta 5dr 09reg 18k, Black £6,199
Qashqai 1.5 DCi N-Tec 5dr 59reg 32k, 6spd, Panoramic Roof, Sat Nav etc £11,999
Qashqai 1.5 DCi Acenta 5dr 59reg 26k, 6speed etc £10,699
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Peug 207 1.4 VTi Sport S/Wagon 60reg 44k, later model £6,799
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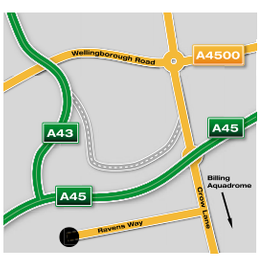

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2007 56 **CORSA 1.2 DESIGN** 5 door, blue, 66,000 miles £3995
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2002 52 **ASTRA 1.6 CLUB** 5 door, green, 83,000 miles £1995
1999 T **ASTRA 2.0 Di LS,** 5 door, silver, average mileage £995

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2004 54 **ROVER 45 1.6 CLUB SE,** 4 door, silver £1495
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2003 03 **ROVER 75 2.0 CDTi CONNOISSEUR** 4 door, black, above average mileage £1495
2001 Y **ROVER 75 2.5 CONNOISEUR TOURER** 5 door, burgundy, 85,000 miles £1995
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2011 11 **FOCUS 1.6 TDCi (110) SPORT** 5 door, grey, 25,000 miles £10495
2010 10 **PEUGEOT 308 SW 1.6 HDi (90) S** 5 door estate, black, 9,600 miles £9995
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2006 06 **ASTRA 1.3 CDTi LIFE** 5 door estate, grey. High mileage £1995
2003 53 **FORD GALAXY 1.9 TDi (130) ZETEC** 5 door, grey, above average mileage £3495
2002 52 **RENAULT LAGUNA 1.9 DCi DYNAMIQUE** 5 door, silver, 109,000 miles £1995

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2012 12 **FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC (new model)** 5 door, blue, 1376 miles £12995
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2008 58 **FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC** 5 door, black, 22,000 miles £7495
2004 04 **FOCUS 2.0 ST 170** 3 door, silver, 44,000 miles £3495
2001 Y **FOCUS 1.8 LX** 5 door estate, silver, 108,000 miles £1295

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2010 60 **MERIVA 1.7 CDTi EXCLUSIVE** 5 door diesel auto, blue, 6400 miles £10495
2006 55 **MERIVA 1.4 LIFE** 5 door, mulberry, 30,000 miles £3695

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2009 58 **PEUGEOT 206 1.4 LOOK** 3 door, silver, 28,000 miles £5495
2005 55 **PEUGEOT 206 1.4 SW VERVE** 5 door, blue, 40,000 miles £3995
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2011 61 **PEUGEOT 207 1.6 HDi ACTIVE** 5 door, blue, 6,800 miles £9995
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2001 Y **PEUGEOT 307 1.6 LX** 5 door, blue £1995

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2010 10 **PEUGEOT 308 1.6 HDi S** 5 door auto, silver, 16,000 miles £8995
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2001 51 **PEUGEOT 206 1.6 S** 2 door auto COUPE CABRIOLET, blue, 88,000 miles £1995
2000 W **ASTRA 1.6 CLUB** estate auto, silver, above average miles £1495
1999 V **VAUXHALL OMEGA 2.5 V6 CD** 5 door auto estate car , silver, average mileage £795
1998 S **TOYOTA AVENSIS 1.8 GLS** 5 door auto, silver, average mileage £995
1990 H **MAZDA MX5 1.6 2 door EUNOS CONVERTIBLE** auto, silver, low mileage £995

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2004 04 **RENAULT SCENIC EXPRESSION 1.6** 5 door, blue, average miles £2495
2003 53 **CITROEN XSARA PICASSO 1.8 SX,** 5 door, blue, above average mileage £1995
2003 03 **RENAULT SCENIC 1.6 FIDJI** 5 door, people carrier, silver, average mileage £1695
2003 52 **ZAFIRA 1.8 ELEGANCE** 5 door, burgundy, 72,000 miles £2995
2001 Y **FIAT MULTIPLA 1.9 ELX JTD** 5 door, 6 seater, silver £1495
2001 Y **ZAFIRA 1.6 COMFORT** 5 door, green, 81,000 miles £1995
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2002 52 **NISSAN MICRA 1.0 S** 3 door, red, 68,000 miles £1995
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2002 02 **CITROEN XSARA 1.6 LX** 5 door, silver, 72,000 miles £1695
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2000 W **PEUGEOT 406 2.0 GLX** estate, 5 door, red, 96,000 miles £1995
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1999 V **VECTRA 1.8 LS** 5 door estate, silver average mileage. £995
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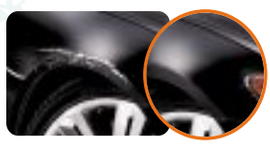

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Your CV

When you send your CV off to a potential employer, remember that you won't be the only one. Hundreds of other people could be applying for the job as well.

So what are you going to do to make you stand out from the crowd? Why should an employer take a chance on you instead of someone else?

Your CV is your first real chance to sell yourself to a potential employer. Most employers will scan through a CV in about 30 seconds so you need to grab their attention from the start - and make them want to invite you for an interview.

There are five main areas to consider when writing your CV:

• Make sure your CV looks the part. Your CV should look clean and tidy - don't scrawl it out on a piece of A4 paper. If you haven't got access to a PC or printer, ask a friend or use your local library. Use a good quality paper and steer clear of fancy borders and front covers.

• Watch out for silly spelling and grammar mistakes. They make you look lazy and show employers that you don't really care. It's not difficult to do a spell check on your PC and if you're really stuck then don't just guess, reach for a dictionary. Get a friend to read through your CV for you - a second opinion is always useful.

• Make sure your CV is well organised. When you list your previous jobs, make sure the dates are correct and try not to leave any gaps. If you took time out to go travelling then say so - employers won't mark you down just because you've tried something new.

• Don't waffle. Remember that employers don't have time to read every word of your CV. Long paragraphs and sentences put people off, so try bullet-points to break up text. Make sure your CV is no longer than two pages long - employers don't want your life history, they just want to see that you've got what it takes to do the job.

• Don't list any failures. Employers have enough trouble finding someone who is right for the job - they don't need help finding reasons not to employ you. If you have to include a mistake from your past, make sure you show the employer that you learnt something from the experience.

Keep it simple

Personal details
Start off with your full name, address, home and mobile phone numbers and email address . If you are offered an interview, the employer will want to get hold of you so give him as many options as possible.

Summary/professional profile
This is the No1 area for selling yourself. Set out your main skills and personal qualities but keep it interesting and tight - one paragraph should do to cover everything.

Education and qualifications
List your qualifications and education history, with the most recent first. You don't need to list the grades for each exam you have passed unless they were exceptional results - simply listing the number and type of exams you've passed is fine. Also, list any relevant professional organisations you belong to and training courses you have been on.

Work experience
Start with your most recent position and work backwards, giving addresses along with start and finish dates. Set out your main responsibilities, duties and most importantly achievements, along with any skills you picked up or improvements you made while you were there. This is a really important section in your CV so make it count - but don't waffle.

If you have not had a full-time job before, detail any part-time jobs you may have held or any placement you have been on.

Other skills
Set out any computer skills you may have and the software you are most familiar with. Can you type, do shorthand or speak a foreign language fluently? If you have a driving licence, let the employer know. If it's clean, tell them.

Interests & hobbies
Briefly list what you get up to in your spare time. Put down any positions you hold in clubs or associations, along with any responsibilities and achievements.

References
Make sure you have at least two people (including one from your previous or current job) who will tell an employer what a thoroughly nice person you are and what a potential asset to the company you would be.

If you want to list them now make sure you include their name, job title, postal & e-mail address and contact phone numbers. Alternatively, just put "Available on request" so the employer knows to follow up references at a later date.

Add a covering letter

The main aim of a covering letter is to encourage an employer to give you a chance. You want them to read your CV, so sell it to them. You should always enclose a covering letter when applying for a job - most employers won't consider you unless you do.

A covering letter should let the employer know why you are interested in the job and why you think you can do it.

The hints and tips below should point you in the right direction:

• Keep it simple. A covering letter should be short and to the point - no more than six paragraphs.

• Mention the job. If you are replying to an advert, mention what the job is and where you saw it. The company may be advertising for other positions and it may not be clear which job you are applying for.

• Sell yourself. Explain why you are the perfect candidate for the job. Show off your strengths and experience. Refer to your CV - if it goes missing then at least an employer will know that you've sent it.

• Check it for mistakes. A silly spelling mistake in a covering letter is likely to cost you your chance of getting an interview. Also, make sure it is addressed to the right person in the right department.

A covering letter can be just as important as a CV in getting you an interview. It's your first point of contact with your potential employer - so make it count.

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NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW STATUTORY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council, at its meeting on 3rd December, approved the statutory recommendations listed in paragraphs 1 to 12 below following the Community Governance Review.

On 21st January 2013, the Council will decide whether to give effect to the recommendations. Implementation of recommendations to which the Council decides to give effect, will take place through creation of formal Reorganisation Orders, the form of which will be agreed at the Council meeting on 21st January 2013.

The decisions about the final outcome of the Community Governance Review will be publicised.

1. **Parklands**
   That a Parish Council should not be created in the Parklands ward area of Northampton.
2. **Rectory Farm**
   That a Parish Council should not be created in the Rectory Farm area of Northampton.
3. **Sunnyside and Obelisk**
   That a Parish Council should not be created in the Sunnyside and Obelisk wards of Northampton.
4. **West Hunsbury**
   (a) That a Parish be created in the West Hunsbury ward area of Northampton.
   (b) That the new Parish should be represented by a Parish Council.
   (c) That the new Parish Council be known as West Hunsbury Parish Council. An alternative style is not recommended.
   (d) That the electoral arrangements for West Hunsbury Parish Council will be that the Parish Council comprises 8 councillors and that there will be no warding arrangements for the Parish. The first elections will take place in May 2013 with Councillors elected for an initial term of office lasting for two years with further elections taking place in May 2015 and four yearly after that.
5. **Westone**
   That a Parish Council should not be created in the Westone ward area of Northampton.
6. **St James**
   That a Parish Council should not be created in the St James ward area of Northampton.
7. **Hunsbury Meadows**
   (a) That a Parish be created in the Hunsbury Meadows area of Northampton.
   (b) That the new Parish should be represented by a Parish Council.
   (c) That the new Parish Council be known as Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council. An alternative style is not recommended.
   (d) That the electoral arrangements for Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council will be that the Parish Council comprises 8 councillors and that there will be no warding arrangements for the Parish. The first elections will take place in May 2013 with Councillors elected for an initial term of office lasting for two years with further elections taking place in May 2015 and four yearly after that.
   (e) That further consultation be carried out with the new Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council and Upton Parish Council with regard to extending the proposed Parish boundary to include the development at Pineham Village.
8. **Wootton and East Hunsbury – Turners Boundary Change**
   (a) That the Parish boundary should be changed and the new boundary be agreed to move the properties in Turners Court and Turners Gardens affected by the proposal into Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish.
   (b) That this proposal will take effect from 1 April 2013.
   (c) That this proposal does not require any other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the Parish.
9. **Wootton and East Hunsbury/ Collingtree – Belfry Lane Boundary Change**
   (a) That the Parish boundary should be changed and the new boundary be agreed to move the properties in Belfry Lane affected by the proposal from Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish into Collingtree Parish.
   (b) That this proposal will take effect from 1 April 2013.
   (c) That this proposal does not require any other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the Parishes affected.
10. **Hardingstone/ Great Houghton – Boundary Changes**
   (a) That the Parish boundary for Hardingstone Parish Council should be changed and the new boundary be agreed.
   (b) That the Parish boundary for Great Houghton Parish Council should be changed and the new boundary be agreed, to include land to the north to be coterminous with the boundary for polling district SNRME.
   (c) That these proposals will take effect from 1 April 2013.
   (d) That these proposals do not require any other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the Parishes affected.
11. **Wootton and East Hunsbury – Parish Split**
   (a) That the existing Parish of Wootton and East Hunsbury be abolished on 1 April 2015.
   (b) That a new Parish be created in the Wootton area of Northampton with effect from 1 April 2015.
   (c) That the new Parish in the Wootton area should be represented by a Parish Council.
   (d) That the new Parish Council be known as Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council. An alternative style is not recommended.
   (e) That the electoral arrangements for Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council will be that the Parish Council comprises 8 councillors and that there will be no warding arrangements for the Parish. The first elections will take place in May 2015 and four yearly after that
   (f) That a new Parish be created in the East Hunsbury area of Northampton with effect from 1 April 2015.
   (g) That the new Parish in the East Hunsbury area should be represented by a Parish Council.
   (h) That the new Parish Council be known as East Hunsbury Parish Council. An alternative style is not recommended.
   (i) That the electoral arrangements for East Hunsbury Parish Council will be that the Parish Council comprises 8 councillors and that there will be no warding arrangements for the Parish. The first elections will take place in May 2015 and four yearly after that
12. **Upton – Boundary change**
   (a) That the boundary for Upton Parish should be changed to that proposed.
   (b) That this proposal will take effect from 1 April 2013.
   (c) That the Parish will continue to be known as Upton Parish.
   (d) That the Parish will continue to be represented by a Parish Council and that the Parish Council be known as Upton Parish Council.
   (e) That this proposal does not require any other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the Parish affected.
   (f) That governance arrangements for the Upton Parish should be reviewed by no later than 1 April 2027 to ensure that they reflect the changing demographics and community interests within the expanded community.

Full details of the proposals and the decisions taken by the Council can be viewed on-line at www.northampton.gov.uk/cgr

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Pisi wants more from the Saints

RUGBY UNION

GEORGE Pisi is frustrated by Northampton Saints' lack of consistency, believing if they can find that in the second half of the season then they will be able to challenge for top honours.

An 18-9 defeat at home to defending champions Harlequins on Saturday saw the Saints slip out of the Aviva Premiership top four and they now face the difficult prospect of taking on second placed Saracens in Milton Keynes on Sunday.

What was particularly disappointing was that the Quins defeat came on the back of a memorable triumph away to previously unbeaten Ulster in the Heineken Cup the week before. Pisi feels it is only minor changes that are needed.

"We're not consistent enough and we don't want to be a sometimes team, we want to be an all of the time team," said the Samoan centre. "We just need to tweak the little things and we will be fine.

"We need to make everything count and these little opportunities that we are given, we need to take them. As a team we can do that and we're not far off from winning these tight games, but it's just not going our way at the moment."

Team mate GJ Van Velze echoed those sentiments and is in little doubt that the squad are capable of ironing out those issues ahead of the clash with Sarries.

"There is a lot of quality in the team and we know that we made errors, and none of those are things that we can't make right in one week," said Van Velze.

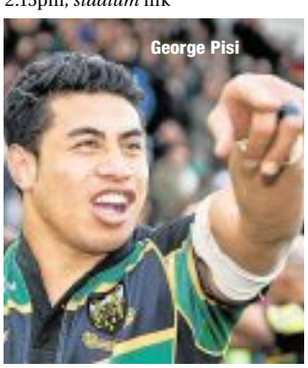
"We turned it around after the Ulster home game, so there is no need to push any panic buttons."

Saracens strengthened their grip on a top two spot that guarantees a home semi-final with an impressive 22-0 dismantling of Bath at the Recreation Ground.

However, a win over their bitter rivals would lift Northampton back into the play-off places and provide a timely boost ahead of potentially tricky games away to Exeter Chiefs and at home to Gloucester early in the new year.

"It's going to be a tough run, but if we can get a win under our belts and move forward from there then it is going to lead us well for the rest of the competition," said Pisi.

■ Saracens v Saints, Sunday, 2.15pm, *stadium* mk


George Pisi

EYE BALL: Ross McMillan is one of the unsung members of the squad
Picture: Andy Kearns

McMillan is milking his return to the top

Marc Bazeley meets the Saints hooker who was milking cows and digging up roads

RUGBY UNION

ROSS McMillan does not have the most glamorous job in professional rugby.

The 25-year-old serves as Northampton Saints' third-choice hooker behind Dylan Hartley and Mikey Haywood, plays the occasional game for the Wanderers, holds the tackle bags and, occasionally, trundles on as a late replacement for the first team.

But McMillan is just happy to be afforded the chance of playing top-level rugby again after several years spent in the lower leagues and earning a living with an assortment of jobs outside of rugby.

Yet, in 2006, he seemed to have the rugby world at his feet. He was signed by Aviva Premiership giants Gloucester from Championship side Nottingham and was a cornerstone of the England Under-19 team.

Yet the wheels on his career did not just come to a shuddering halt, they almost fell off when he suffered a season-ending cruciate ligament injury in a pre-season friendly against Bayonne in 2008. He was released by the Cherry & Whites the following summer.

A season with Coventry ended in administration and relegation. He must have started to wonder what was going on when a spell at Birmingham & Solihull Bees ended in similar fashion.

There was bound to be plenty of soul searching during that dark period when McMillan was rising at 4am to milk cows, digging roads and doing electrical work to make ends meet.

Playing part-time rugby supplemented his income but McMillan craved another shot at the big time.

It came when he was offered a trial by Northampton in January. He took it with both hands and impressed sufficiently to earn a full-time contract as the club sought cover for the injured Brett Sharman.

McMillan has since resurrected a career he felt was heading for the wilderness.

"There have been times, especially when I got relegated with Bees and ended up dropping down to National One, I thought that was it," said McMillan.

"I was still going to play rugby, but it was part of a process that I needed to pay the bills."

McMillan acknowledged he became bitter and disillusioned during his spell lower down the rugby pyramid.

"I fell out of love with the game because nothing was going my way," he said. "I was looking at the top flight and thinking: 'I can do that job, I can do better than him, I can give him a good fight for it'. The Saints have provided me that and I'm grateful for it.

"I was in horrible shape when I turned up, but I had a good pre-season and it has given me that enjoyment and that hunger back."

McMillan is among the lower earners in a squad packed with internationals but that does not bother him one iota.

"I don't care if I don't earn a great deal from it," McMillan said. "I'm just enjoying being back playing rugby at the highest level."

Saints director of rugby Jim Mallinder knows what it is like to have to earn a living outside of rugby. During the amateur era, he combined playing full back for Sale with working as a teacher at William Hulme's Grammar School in Manchester.

Mallinder feels the unconventional route taken by him and McMillan should serve as a lesson to some professionals.

"It probably would do a lot of our players a lot of good to do some jobs and see what the other half do, and that's why I think it's important that our lads get out into the community," said Mallinder.

"Ross is such a character, he is very grounded, he has had experience of the real world which is important. He has had to work for a living, he knows the value and what a pleasure it is to be a professional rugby player."

You will therefore hear no grumbling from McMillan as he spends session after session providing opposition for the first team in game situations.

"I think it humbled me," said McMillan.

"Some of the lads in here don't understand what it is like to go out and work early hours, long days and then train, and actually take yourself away from your family and your loved ones to train.

"I wouldn't change it because I think it has made me into the person that I am and the rugby player that I am because, as bad as it sounds for some, I enjoy turning up for training Monday to Friday because it is better than grafting."

McMillan was an unused replacement against Harlequins on Saturday yet will, in all likelihood, be back watching from the stands on Sunday as Hartley returns from his two-week suspension to face Saracens this weekend in Milton Keynes.

Yet it will still beat digging up the roads for a living.

"I've got horrible grafting hands from working with shovels and mucking out cows," McMillan said.

"There is nothing better as far as I'm concerned than chucking a rugby ball around and running around a lake."

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Window of opportunity for Cobblers

FOOTBALL

BY MARC BAZELEY
marc.bazeley@hpnorthants.co.uk

AIDY Boothroyd believes the opening of the transfer window next week will prove just as important for Northampton Town as last season as he seeks to bring in players capable of establishing the Cobblers as promotion challengers.

Boothroyd worked his magic in the loan market last year, recruiting Clarke Carlisle and Ben Harding who proved crucial in helping the club ensure survival in League Two.

Now the Northampton boss is eyeing adding to the squad with the aim of mounting a promotion charge. Town are just one point away from the play-off places.

"It's going to be just as important as last year, but what I would say is that it is a slightly different situation," said Boothroyd.

"Last year was about getting as many loan players on the pitch as possible because I didn't think we were strong enough with what we had. That was to survive, whereas this year it will be either keeping or getting loan players or potential signings in that I think are going to take us to the next level. In terms of performances, it has been good and there has been lots of improvements in terms of results, but it's not enough and we want to be better than we are."

Contact over potential targets has been made by Boothroyd, but he will wait and see what the situation is with injuries before making any concrete moves along with deciding whether or not to renew the loan deals of Danny East and Emyr Huws.

Midfielder Luke Guttridge had been due to return from injury in the postponed Boxing Day fixture away to AFC Wimbledon. Defensive duo David Artell and John Johnson are also slated to be back by the middle of next month.

Guttridge is likely start in Saturday's trip to League Two leaders Gillingham, while top scorer Adebayo Akinfenwa is available after serving his one-match ban.

Northampton won 2-0 at home to Aldershot Town in Akinfenwa's absence, with Jake Robinson and Clive Platt getting the goals.

Boothroyd is pleased with the depth of his squad.

"Sometimes when a big player moves out of the team it gives someone else the chance to do a little bit more and grow a little bit more and your team attacks differently and maybe surprises the opposition," said Boothroyd.

Log on after the whistle on Saturday for Gills report
www.northampton-news-hp.co.uk/sport

PATIENT SAINT: Ross McMillan has taken a circuitous route to Franklin's Gardens. Find out the assortment of jobs the hooker performed before joining the Saints. Page 39. Picture: Andy Kearns

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